

The Link

First Congregational
United Church of Christ
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Volume 37 No. 9

God is Still Speaking,

May 12, 2015

The Definition of Church: The Pastor's Annual Report

In reflecting upon this past year, I find myself focused on the meaning of two words. The first word that strikes me is “prophet.” For much of 2014 and part of 2015, our theme was “The Year of the Prophets.” On the first Sunday of each month, we would learn about a different biblical prophet. In the process, we learned about our Hebraic roots. We learned about the Jewish heritage that was fundamental in shaping Jesus and the early church. The etymological root of the word “prophet” by itself is interesting. It is thought to have originally meant “one who is called.”

The other word that stands out for me is *ekklesia*, the Greek word often translated as church. It literally means “the called out ones.” In other words, a church can be regarded as an assembly of prophets. We are a group of persons who intentionally gather to discern God’s will in our lives. The results can be transformative—not only for ourselves, but also for the broader world. Our divine calling inevitably orients us outward. God breaks down the walls of self-interest and absorption as our sense of passion and purpose becomes bound to the needs and sufferings of others.

Recently, I have thought a lot about what it means to be a church and why church is so important. If you have not already done so, I encourage you to read an article on our website called “Ten Reasons to Go to Church.” It was written by the Rev. Anne Russ who kindly gives permission for others to freely share what she wrote. As Christians, we are not always good at talking about church and why others might want to join us. This article is terrific at helping us to find the right words. One part I will highlight is the # 2 reason to go to church:

Taking a break from our hectic lives to come to church is accepting the gift of Sabbath. Wayne Mueller says “(Sabbath) dissolves the artificial urgency of our days, because it liberates us from the need to be finished.” We don’t take Sabbath and come to worship because we have time and have finished up everything that needs to be done. We take Sabbath because it is time to stop, and we are designed to stop, rest and reflect. Those who don’t are destined to crash and burn.

As we take stock of this past year in the life of our church, I invite all of you to pause for a moment. Reflect upon the many accomplishments detailed in our annual report. Reflect upon the incredible talent, wisdom, and generosity of our members. Reflect as well upon the ministries of our gifted staff: Virginia Dunbar, Angie Hill, Kristina Martin, Christopher Schindler, Richard Trefren, and Kathy Woolley.

In the year ahead, let us continue to be the ones who are called out. Let us continue to be prophets in whatever small and large ways we can. If we do this, we cannot fail to make a difference in our world.

Your brother in Christ,

Pastor Brooks

WORSHIP IN MAY

May 17, 2015

10 a.m. Worship Service. . Infant and Toddler Care available.

10:20 a.m.: Christian Education for children 4yrs. - Grade 8. MAZI meets at 11:30 a.m.

Worship Volunteers:

Greeters:

Worship Leader: Pam Osborne

Ushers: Ken Rowe and Cory Saum-Blystone
Mike King and Ray Jones

Congregational Meeting immediately following worship for the election of new officers.

May 24, 2015

10 a.m. Worship Service.

Infant and Toddler Care available. 10:20 a.m.:
Christian Education for children 4yrs. - Grade 8. No
MAZI this Sunday.

Worship Volunteers:

Greeters:

Worship Leader: Harriet Anani

Ushers: David Macko and David Harrington
Sue Rush

May 31, 2015

10 a.m. Worship Service.

Infant and Toddler Care available. 10:20 a.m.:
Christian Education for children 4yrs. - Grade 8. No
MAZI this Sunday.

Worship Volunteers:

Greeters:

Worship Leader: Rory Martindale

Ushers: David Macko and David Harrington
Sue Rush

**WELCOME
KYLIE HELEN BERNDT!!
May 6, 2015
8 lbs. 4 oz.
20 inches tall**

**Thank You, Thank You
Thank You, Thank You!**

Your generosity and love was overwhelming. It's wonderful being a 60 year UCC person. It shows what a caring family you are. Thank you so much for all the flowers, cards and trips to Camas. I'm looking forward to getting back to church soon.

Love to all, Jean Matthews

REMEMBERING OUR FAMILY IN PRAYER

Prayer requests for:

Our sons and daughters overseas, and the people of the Middle East;

CONTINUING PRAYER

REQUESTS FOR:

Farley Maxwell

Joan Blair

Ken Kerr

Brad Fletcher

Betty Ferner

Jean Matthews

Cordelia McBride

Dorothea Johnson

It is with a heavy heart that we announce the death of **Gloria Ross** on Monday, May 4. Our hearts, thoughts and prayers go out to **Rev. Charlie Ross** and **Tammy Ross Testa** and **Tyler, Angus and Emerson Testa** on the loss of their beloved wife, mother and grandmother. A Celebration of Gloria's Life will be held on Sunday, May 31st at 3:00 PM in the Sanctuary.

Our thoughts and prayers also go out to **Marnie Wright and her Family** following the death of Husband and Father, **Chris Wright** on May 11.

UPCOMING PUBLICATION DATES FOR "The Link"

Link Deadline

Link Mailed

May 24, 2015

May 26, 2015

CAPITAL CAMPAIGN DINNER

Contributed by Ellie Bradley

Come join us for dinner and some lively entertainment to celebrate the conclusion of our current Capital Campaign. The theme will be Italian and we hope a good time will be had by all.

The menu will include pasta shells with Italian sausage and marinara sauce, salad, dessert and drinks.

DATE: Sunday, May 31

TIME: 11:30 AM

WHERE: Bradford Hall



Teacher and Graduate Recognition Sunday

If you have a graduate in your family, please let Kathy in the office know the graduate's name and plans after graduation so we can add him/her to the bulletin that day. You may drop off your announcement in the office until June 10th or email it to kathy@vanucc.org.



UCC SPECIAL OFFERING STRENGTHEN THE CHURCH

On May 24th, Pentecost Sunday, we will collect the annual UCC special offering that helps to reimagine and build the future of the UCC. Shared at the conference and national levels, Strengthen the Church (STC) largely supports youth ministries and full-time leaders for new churches in parts of the country where the UCC voice has not been heard.

As God calls our congregations to be the "church" in new ways, your generosity will plant new churches, awaken new ideas in existing churches and develop the spiritual life in our youth and young adults. STC funds will also be used to award grants to help congregations communicate the "God is still speaking," message. **To contribute, simply make your check out to our church with "UCC STC" in the memo line.** (You can donate any Sunday in May.)

Thinking About Becoming A Member?

If you have decided that we are the church family for you, you can attend this two-hour orientation class and light brunch after worship on Sunday, June 14th. If you are interested in attending, let Pastor Brooks know as you leave the sanctuary today. Childcare provided upon request.

Ministry Meetings in May

Contributed by Leslie Chapman, Clerk

The nominations committee would like to send a very sincere **thank you** to each and every one of you that said yes when asked to accept a leadership position within our church. Your positions will officially begin on June 1st. However, we would like to extend an invitation for you to attend the May meetings of the ministries or committees you are joining. This will give everyone new to a position as well as those leaving positions to work together for one meeting. We also offer our sincere gratitude to all of you who are leaving a position, most of whom are moving to a new position, for all you have done over the last two years or more of your terms.

Not all groups meet each month but the following are currently scheduled for May.

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| Membership | May 11 at 1:00 pm in Plymouth Room |
| CE | May 12 at 6:30pm in the Plymouth Room (usually in Classroom 2) |
| Parish Life | May 12 at 6:30 pm in Nettie Fries Lounge |
| Mission & Outreach | May 20 at 5:30 pm in Nettie Fries Lounge |
| Communications | May 26 at 7:00 pm via Internet |
| Property & Finance | May 27 at 6:00 pm in Classroom 2 |
| Memorials | May 28 at 10:00 am in Nettie Fries Lounge |
| Council | May 28 at 7:00 pm in Classroom 2 |



VANCOUVER SPRING SUMMIT
MAY 31ST 1 – 4 PM at Vancouver Heights
United Methodist Church

Come join Faith Action Network as we lay the foundation for next session's legislative agenda. Summits provide an opportunity for community members to voice the issues that they care about and help shape our legislative focuses for the following year. At this year's summit we will have **workshops on: Ending Homelessness, Stopping Wage Theft/Raising Minimum Wage, Stopping Human Trafficking, WAmend (ending corporate control of elections), and Environmental concerns.**

Barbecue will be provided, so bring a side dish if you can. Invite others from the community to this important event!

To RSVP please visit <http://fanwa.org/register-for-annual-regional-spring-summits/>. If you have any questions, please contact Karen Kulm at lk.kulm@gmail.com.

Cards For Virginia!

Contributed by Kristina Martin

As you know, our beloved music director is retiring after 25 years here at 1st Congregational UCC. We are collecting cards for Virginia Dunbar to show our appreciation for her musical leadership all these years. If you would like to give her a card, please bring it to church between now and June 1st and put it in the box in the narthex. (They can also be mailed to the church, c/o Kristina Martin.) They will be presented to Virginia on June 7th. Thank you!



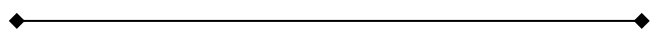
PRIDE SEASON IS ALMOST HERE
HELP US CELEBRATE!

The Portland Pride Festival & Parade will be June 13-14. All of the local UCC churches are signed up to march together in the parade on June 14th. Step off time is 11:00 AM, but we will start line-up in the North Park Blocks. Exact details of our line-up location will be available in June.

We will also have a table at the festival at Waterfront Park on June 13-14. Tabling at this event is an incredible experience as we share our radical welcome and love with the public.

Please volunteer to represent our church and carry our banner in the parade. It is a joyful experience that you do not want to miss!

To volunteer for the table or the parade, please contact Karen Kulm at 360-991-5774 or email at lk.kulm@gmail.com.



Job Announcement: Opening for Part-Time Music Director

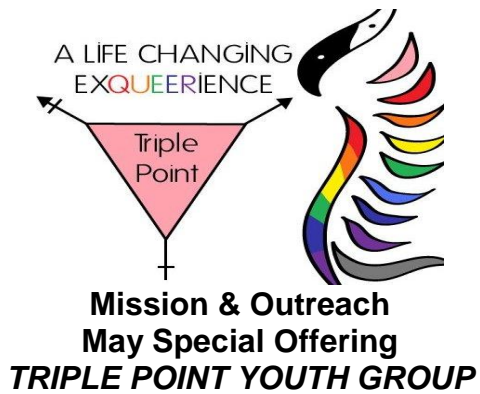
First Congregational United Church of Christ in Vancouver, Washington is an open and affirming church seeking a part-time Music Director who will bring musical excellence to our vibrant worship services.

The position requires professional music training with a demonstrated ability to teach and coach choral singing.

Application Deadline: May 31st, 2015.
Application requirements: Cover letter and resume.

Salary: \$10,000 for 9.5 months
Email: kenerowe@msn.com

Contact Person: Ken Rowe
Further Information about Position:
www.vanucc.org/front-page/music-director-position



Triple Point is a local youth group for gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, questioning, and straight ally youth, ages 13-21 years old. They provide a safe space, support, education, information and referral services through Children's Home Society of Washington (CHSW.) Triple Point also provides youth with a meal and structured activities during each meeting. The Vancouver chapter currently meets at the CHSW building at 1112 Columbia St, downtown Vancouver, but they are in the process of planning and fundraising for their own building.

Triple Point meets every Tuesday from 3:00 – 6:00pm for Drop-In and the Support Group meets in the evening from 6 p.m.-8 p.m. Volunteers provide a meal for the kids and mentoring. If you are interested in volunteering, please contact Spring Dowse, Triple Point Program Coordinator, at 360 695-1325. You can also check out:

<http://childrenshomesociety.org/triplepoint.html>

Please consider making a donation to this wonderful group of youth by writing a check to our church and noting "Triple Point" in the memo line.